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## President Ben Shelly Visits Alaska Native Leaders and Corporations



(L to R) Emil McCord, President of Tyonek Native Corporation, President Ben Shelly, Rocky Standifer and Randy Standifer, Tyonek Village Tribal Council member. President Shelly presented a pendalton blanket to President McCord at a Tyonek hunting lodge.

**Anchorage, AK**—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended the National 8(a) Association Annual Conference to promote Navajo economic development, build business partnerships and discuss government contracts on June 23-25 in Anchorage.

The annual conference brings together tribally owned and Alaskan Native businesses that utilize the U.S. Small Business Administration's 8(a) Business Development Program to receive government contract set-asides.

Alaska Native Corporations have successfully leveraged the 8(a) program to foster economic development by creating native owned businesses that have the experience and ability to both qualify for the

government contract set-asides. President Shelly's vision to help promote economic development on the Navajo Nation is to see Navajo businesses engage in similar government contracting activities.

President Shelly met with Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) President Julie Kitka to discuss how the Navajo Nation and the AFN can partner on mutual economic and political issues.

"Partnering for the continued success of our Native people is not just a good thing to do," said President Shelly. "It's critical to our survival as we see shrinking federal budgets and detrimental policies and it's important to coordinate where there is mutual interest."

During the three-day visit, President Shelly met with NANA Regional Development Corporation, CIRI Development Corporation, Old Harbor Village Corporation, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, and Tyonek Native Corporation.

President Shelly focused his discussions on energy and infrastructure development. The meeting with Tyonek included a village visit to the closed community of Tyonek and a meeting with village tribal leadership.

He also met with the Alaska Native Heritage Center and the Alaska Tribal Health Consortium touring both the Center and the local tribal hospital.

President Shelly plans to the Alaska Federation of Natives annual meeting in October to further discuss strategic partnerships between Alaska Native Corporations and the Navajo Nation.

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